

**Minutes
The Greater Kansas City
Disabled Federal Employees Council
Tuesday, January 13, 2004
09:00 to 11:00 A.M.**

Location: The Whole Person
301 East Armour Boulevard, Suite 430
Kansas City, MO 64111-1252

Attendees: Jim Jordan, Daryl Sprague, Joseph Marvil, Janet Hutsell, Greg Salyer ,
Debbie Dahl, Sultan Farakhan

Our Acting Chairperson, Jim Jordan opened the meeting and introduced DFEC members to the staff at The Whole Person

James Jones began speaking to the group in sign language. As he talked using sign language, he brought began a two-way conversation with an Interpreter (Linda Morgan) in the room. That conversation went on for a while as the rest of us watched the conversation. Finally, Mr. Jones began to speak vocally and asked us how it felt to be the ones with a disability. After all, he explained, he was using legitimate tools of communications and was able to carry on a conversation with another person in the room without any problem. There were only a few of us who where missing out on the conversation. It was our problem that we could not participate in the signed conversation we were the ones with the disability in this case. What an impact that made on those of us who witnessed this demonstration. I think he definitely had his audience's attention.

Mr. Jones continued to tell us about his organization and his work in the Greater Kansas City community getting movie theaters to make their movies available to people with hearing problems. His efforts had proven quite favorable, as these companies had embraced this group of people who needed a service. The community had also turned out to support these companies by spending their money at these locations making it a win-win situation. In the end we learned how this organization had people who were able to be role models and mentors for people to help bridge gaps and get them back into the community as active participants. We also learned how they were working within the community to build a database of qualified people who could become employed when given the opportunity.

Our council held a short meeting following the presentation and talked about what we had learned during that visit at The Whole Person. We discussed how our role in the federal workplace could be like this organization. It takes being able to identify people who need help, learning what their qualifications are for a job and having relationships in place with decision-level managers who can hire people who are qualified to do the jobs.

The meeting was adjourned.